

**PUERTO RICAN LEGAL DEFENSE
& EDUCATION FUND, INC.**

**95 MADISON AVENUE
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10016
212-532-8470**



June, 1975

JACK JOHN OLIVERO
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

Dear Friend of the Fund:

The past few months have brought a number of new victories and new activities to our office. PRLDEF has won a major victory in Boston. That City's newly issued school desegregation plan incorporates a number of reforms fought for by Fund attorneys which will ensure greater provision of bilingual and other educational programs for Hispanic children within Boston schools (see Morgan v. Kerrigan attachment). The Fund has also intervened in a desegregation lawsuit in Waterbury, Connecticut and has moved to intervene in a Wilmington, Delaware suit. Our motion to intervene in Connecticut pointed out that the desegregation plan proposed there causes far larger numbers of Puerto Rican as compared to non-Puerto Rican children to be bussed far from their homes. The plan also does not provide for the bilingual and other educational needs of Spanish speaking students.

The Fund also recently reached an agreement in a suit brought in conjunction with the NAACP LDF in an effort to provide equal employment for minorities in the New York City Fire Department. The agreement requires that the Department issue non-discriminatory entrance and promotional exams and provides means by which PRLDEF and the NAACP LDF can monitor the Department's employment practices. The agreement also lowers the Department's former 5'7" height requirement to 5'4" thus opening the door for many more Puerto Rican applicants.

PRLDEF's third legal internship program was inaugurated this month providing civil rights training for seven Puerto Rican law students. This is the highest number of interns the Fund has ever taken on. It is also the first year that an intern will be placed outside of New York City to work with PRLDEF co-counsel on our Philadelphia bilingual suit. Attached is some additional information on our recent activities.

With best wishes

A large, fluid handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Jack John Olivero". The signature is written over the typed name and title.

Jack John Olivero
Chairman of the Board

JJO:vs

**PUERTO RICAN LEGAL DEFENSE
& EDUCATION FUND, INC.**

**95 MADISON AVENUE
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10016**

212-582-8470



Morgan v. Kerrigan

**JACK JOHN OLIVERO
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD**

This lawsuit was originally brought by Black groups seeking to end segregation in the Boston schools. PRIDEF intervened in the suit on behalf of a grassroots coalition of Hispanic parents in order to ensure that the educational needs of Hispanic students would be adequately met by any desegregation plan. There are now approximately 6,600 Hispanic students in Boston schools. The final plan issued on May 10, 1975 incorporated most of the reforms fought for by Fund attorneys. Some examples:

1. Bilingual education will be extended to many more Hispanics as a result of the new plan including to children of Kindergarten age. Since there are over 1,000 Hispanic Kindergartners in Boston, the number of Spanish-speaking children in bilingual programs should increase by at least 25%.
2. Hispanic students in bilingual programs will be assigned to selected schools in sufficiently large numbers (60-100) to permit "clustering" of bilingual classes. This will insure provision of an adequate number of Spanish medium teachers necessary for flexible, comprehensive bilingual programs. Hispanic students not in bilingual programs must be assigned in groups of not less than 20 to prevent the cultural isolation of those students.
3. Blacks and Hispanics form 47% of the students in Boston schools yet they represented only 5% of students in Boston's elite High Schools providing advanced training in Science, Art, etc. An effort will now be made to recruit minorities to these schools, and Blacks and Hispanics must form at least 35% of their student bodies.
4. One Boston School will be set up as a model experiment in multicultural bilingual education. The student body will be 65% Spanish-dominant Hispanic and 35% English-dominant non-Hispanic black and white. All students will be taught in Spanish and English.
5. Special Occupational and Vocational schools will have to provide bilingual programs.
6. Citywide councils which have been set up to promote understanding among the ethnic groups involved in the desegregation plan will include an equitable number of Hispanic representatives.
7. Bilingual programs for children of other language groups (Chinese, Portugese, etc.) will be structured according to the principles won by PRIDEF attorneys for Puerto Rican children.
8. Instructions to parents on how to select and apply for all programs and schools will be issued in Spanish and English.

PUERTO RICAN LEGAL DEFENSE & EDUCATION FUND, INC.

95 MADISON AVENUE
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10016

212-532-8470

NEW YORK POST, MONDAY, JUNE 23, 1975



Trinidad Gonzales (right), director of the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund's summer internship program, meets with her seven students: Griselle Pagan, Segundo Mercado, Wilfredo Lopez, Idelisse Malvano (standing) and Margarita Carrion-Echevarria, Margarita Tosa and Sally Hernandez (sitting).

Post Photo by Arthur Pomerantz

Law Students Get Involved

By AIDA ALVAREZ

Wilfredo Lopez decided to study law after holding a job with the courts as a part-time probations officer.

"It happened all the time," said Wilfredo. "I would ask a guy on probation what went on in court, and he would shrug his shoulders, bewildered."

"I was arrested. Five minutes before my case came up, the lawyer told me to plead guilty—that was the usual answer."

"Maybe these men were really dangerous, or maybe they were innocent. The lawyers didn't know, and probably they didn't care. There were English-speaking lawyers who had very little in common with the Puerto Rican defendant."

"Most of us have come

from Puerto Rican environments. The problems confronting the community are very real to us," said Sally Hernandez, another law student.

Sally and Wilfredo are among seven young Puerto Rican law students who are officially beginning a summer of work as legal interns at the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund, Inc., which has its headquarters at 95 Madison Avenue.

The summer program is the third offered by the Fund, which, through class-action litigation, has led the battle to end discrimination against Puerto Ricans. It is also actively involved in recruiting Puerto Ricans to become lawyers.

"In the U.S. there are about 100 Puerto Rican lawyers.

This is to serve a population of over two million," said Trinidad Gonzales, director of the Fund's legal education component and the 10-week summer program.

Students in the program attend two weeks of seminars on theoretical areas of civil right law, which include legal procedures and principles that can be followed in obtaining bilingual educational programs, bilingual voting materials, and other reforms of benefit to the Hispanic community.

They are also assigned to do legal work on cases presently being litigated by the Fund.

Segundo Mercado was excited by the prospect of practicing civil rights law. "The legal aid lawyer always has one more landlord to fight,"

said Segundo, "But we can file class action suits which have long-lasting impact. We can actually change the system."

"The situations that occur at the grass-roots level would be perpetuated without organizations like this one," said Margarita Rosa. "You have to attack problems at the root."

For more than three years of its existence, the non-profit Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund has been challenging discriminatory practices. They won the right for translation of voting materials into Spanish for Puerto Rican voters in three states, and, come September, children with an English problem will receive bilingual education, as a result of the Fund's efforts.

PUERTO RICAN LEGAL DEFENSE
& EDUCATION FUND, INC.

95 MADISON AVENUE
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10016

212-532-8470

April 7, 1975



Puerto Ricans To File Suit Against School Plan

By SUE SIMONEAU

Puerto Ricann parents will file a suit in federal district court in New Haven today to stop the school board's desegregation plan, which would close the schools in the predominantly Puerto Rican South End.

The suit charges that the Puerto Ricans will lose their neighborhood schools, Merri-man and Maloney, and will be bused in disproportionate numbers to predominantly white schools. The case is being filed by the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund, Inc. of New York City, for the South End Education Committee and 16 parents whose children are affected by the intergration plan.

"Virtually the entire burden of integration is placed on the Puerto Rican community," the suit charges, adding that 65 per cent of the Puerto Rican children will be bused for desegregation, compared to only 5 per cent of the white pupils.

The suit filed against the board also calls for an injunction to stop the proposal, a minority hiring plan and a guarantee that bi-lingual classes will be provided to the Spanish-speaking youngsters.

The controversial desegrega-

tion proposal, called Plan H, was adopted by the school board last year under threat of a U.S. Justice Department suit charging de facto segregation.

The plan calls for new middle schools in the East, West and North Ends and the closing of several ancient grammar schools in the inner city attended by minority group students. The East End desegregation proposals were approved shortly before the Bergin Complex in the East End opened, but the West and North End plans are being reviewed.

Parents of Merriman School children, which was closed last September, charge in the suit that they are unable to participate in activities at their children's new schools because of the lack of public transportation.

The major concern of the Maloney School group is a September 1975 target date for closing the turn-of-the-century building, although school officials have explained that the West End middle school won't be ready until next year. The remaining South End School is Croft, an annex for Maloney's sixth through eighth grades, which will be absorbed by the middle schools.

Commenting on the suit, Jack Olivero, board chairman for the Legal Defense Fund, said: "We are beginning to see that, as a continuing pattern, desegregation plans drawn up in the Northeast have tended to ignore the needs of Puerto Rican students. The plan adopted in Waterbury is a clear instance of one which victimizes Puerto Rican parents and children in order to appease the racial prejudices and fears of the white community."

The fund, a non-profit group, recently filed suit for Spanish-speaking parents in Boston, which is in the midst of a heated integration battle.

(Continued from Page One)

white students into the South End. "There was no pressure from any group to abandon any plan," he said, adding that Plan H was a compromise drawn from Plans A and F.

School Supt. Michael F. Wallace, who is charged in the suit along with the board and Mayor Victor Mamburno, was unavailable.

Discussing the Puerto Ricans' demand for a minority hiring plan, Deputy Supt. Theodore Martland said the percentage of minority teachers in the system reflects the percentage of minority people with college training. He said he was unable to estimate the number of Spanish-speaking teachers in Waterbury.

Martland also rejected a charge in the suit that white children have been permitted to transfer out of kindergartens in non-white schools, while blacks and Puerto Ricans were denied the option. He said the system had formerly permitted students in a program for minorities to enroll outside of their neighborhood, but had discontinued the practice when the desegregation plan was adopted.

Reacting to the suit charges, School Board President Frank Perrella said Sunday that the board has listened to the objections from the Maloney parents, but has no plans to change Plan until the middle school complexes are ready.

In submitting Plan H, Perrella said, the board had insisted on its right to modify the proposal, depending on population shifts.

Perrella strongly disputed a charge in the suit that the board had bowed to pressure from white parents by abandoning earlier plans to bus some

(Cont'd on Page 2—Lawsuit)

School Comsr. Ronald Brodeur also said Sunday that the board has provided bi-lingual classes to youngsters who need special help. "The board is on record for providing bi-lingual facilities where the need exists. I would challenge the Puerto Rican community to show where we have not provided this service," he said.

Brodeur said, however, that he believes the system must emphasize English as the basic language, providing bi-lingual classes only until the children can be absorbed into regular classes.

The Maloney parents first dramatized their objections to the integration plan with a successful school boycott in January. In meetings since then, school officials have pointed out that the school is outdated, while the South End itself may be unable to support a neighborhood school due to urban renewal and a highway relocation project.

In addition, the creation of a middle school system will give the system the equivalent of two empty schools, officials have said.

WATERBURY REPUBLICAN

FRONT PAGE